

**MANCHESTER
STATE FOREST
SOUTH CAROLINA
COMMISSION OF FORESTRY**

DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

Manchester State Forest, located in southeastern Sumter County, consists of ^{28,830}~~2,830~~ acres. Most of this area is made up of infertile, light sands interspersed with swamps and bays.

This land was acquired by the federal government during the depression years of the early 1930's. Operations as a state forest began as a Land Utilization Project under the Resettlement Administration in 1935.

When the land was acquired, the timber had been badly cut over. Much of the area burned annually. Rehabilitation of the burned, cutover land was begun by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration. They constructed buildings, lakes, roads and trails on the area. Bellefield Plantation House, once the home of South Carolina's World War I Governor, Richard I. Manning, was restored and used as headquarters for the Land Utilization Project. It now serves as the home of the Director of Manchester State Forest.

From 1939 to 1955 this land was leased to the S. C. State Commission of Forestry on a long-term agreement by the federal government. The S. C. State Commission of Forestry had the responsibility of operating the forest, then officially known as Poinsett Project, LU-SC5A, but known locally as Poinsett State Forest. The lease specified the property was to be used as a demonstration-conservation area employing the principles and objectives of planned multiple-use, including forestry, wildlife, and recreation.

Title to the forest was transferred to the State of South Carolina on June 28, 1955 with a reversionary clause stipulating that it be used as a state forest providing for public use.

The State Commission of Forestry is working to rehabilitate the area to make it fully productive. Since 1939, almost 10,000 acres have been planted with tree seedlings. Large scale conversion of scrub oak areas to high value forest land has been completed. Plans for regenerating stands are made before final harvest cutting is begun.



WILDLIFE AND FISH MANAGEMENT

In the early operation of Manchester State Forest most efforts were directed toward protection of the meager population of game animals and birds. With this protection the game population began to increase.

Each year Manchester personnel plant approximately 190 acres of peas, 125 acres of brown top millet, 25 acres of proso millet and 50 acres of corn. In the fall firebreaks and some fields are planted with rye grass providing winter grazing for deer and rabbits. Every year approximately 500 acres of the better land is leased to local farmers. Grain or soybeans left in the fields after harvesting add to wildlife food supplies.

However, the most important aspect of providing food and shelter for wildlife is through the forest management program. The process of clear-cutting moderate sized irregular blocks surrounded by areas of timber normally provides all the food and shelter needed by wildlife.

A special permit is required for hunting dove, quail, rabbit and squirrel. Two organized deer hunts are usually conducted each week during the season, for which there is a small fee in addition to a resident or state license.

Almost 8,000 acres are rented by Shaw Air Force Base as a range for air to ground gunnery practice. Of course, this practice closes the area to other uses.

All lakes on the forest are open to the public for year-round fishing under certain regulations. The lakes are of moderate size, so only electric motors for boats are permitted.

Ponds are drained, fertilized, refilled and restocked as needed. The Wildlife and Marine Resources Department advises on wildlife and fish management. Federal biologists also advise. Revenues from hunting and fishing permits are used to further game and fish management.



SITE PREPARATION AND PLANTING

Since 1939 when the S. C. State Commission of Forestry began leasing Manchester State Forest, nearly 10,000 acres have been planted to pine and hardwood seedlings.

Most of the least productive fields and large acreages of scrub oak land have been planted to pine. Whenever a final harvest cut is made, the stand is regenerated immediately.

To prepare cutover, scrub oak land for new stands, the area is cleared, plowed and planted to pine seedlings. Hardwoods have been planted on the more fertile sites. This method of reforestation produces valuable wildlife openings and creates managed timber stands for future forest products.

PRESCRIBED BURNING

With leaves falling each year, organic litter accumulates on the forest floor, creating a fire hazard.

To reduce this excess litter, fire is used, prescribed and supervised by professional foresters, under selected weather conditions with adjacent areas protected by plowed firebreaks. The fire is set against the wind, creating a slow "backing fire". Beneficial results are: reduction of damaging wildfires; control of brush; improved recreational opportunities; stimulation of deer browse growth and legume seed production preferred by quail and songbirds.





IMPROVEMENT THINNING

The Manchester State Forest has approximately 4,000 acres of 16-to 30-year-old stands in which improvement thinnings have been made. With this age span, thinnings can be for pulpwood or small sawtimber.

As trees grow larger, each tree needs more room. To provide this room some of the trees are removed. The less vigorous trees are cut and made into many useful products. Left to nature, the thinning process is slow, reducing growth of all trees and loss through mortality of the smaller trees. When groups of larger trees die because of disease or insect attack, a salvage operation is initiated to minimize the loss.

When the forest manager determines a thinning is needed to keep the stand growing at a fast rate, the stand is marked. Spots of paint designate trees for removal. A record of usable heights and diameters is kept for calculating volume. The timber is then sold to the highest bidder, who is given a reasonable period of time to remove it.

All logging operations on Manchester State Forest are carefully controlled to avoid damage to soil, water, wildlife areas and the remaining timber.





0 01 01 0071212 3



TIMBER HARVESTING

As a stand of timber matures, the vigor and growth of the trees are reduced while susceptibility to insects and disease is increased. In the managed forest the stand is harvested at the appropriate time and replaced with a new one.

To reproduce this natural resource of southern pines, which provide jobs, products and social benefits, full sunlight is required. Past stands were reproduced when groups of trees died. The forest management program on Manchester State Forest copies nature's method of reproduction by clear-cutting moderate sized irregular blocks. This method is well suited to wildlife and bird production.

In lieu of taxes state forests pay twenty-five percent of their revenue to the county in which it was produced. An annual payment is made to Sumter County by the S. C. State Commission of Forestry. The balance of the revenue is deposited in the State General Fund.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Besides hunting and fishing, Manchester State Forest provides other recreational opportunities. However, because of the proximity of Poinsett State Park, hiking, camping, swimming, and picnicking are not important recreational uses on the forest.

Horseback riding on the forest is growing. A number of parties use the forest. The unpaved access roads and firebreaks make good bridle paths.

Motorcycling is a growing weekend activity on the forest. Most riders are Shaw Air Force Base personnel who belong to motorcycle clubs. The clubs insist that their members adhere to the rules to protect the riding privileges on the forest. They have been most cooperative and are following guidelines regulating this use. The guidelines are simple — ride only roads and firebreaks and use approved mufflers.

Another recreational use is bird watching. Local residents enjoy picking berries, wild plums and crab apples from which jams, jellies and pies are made.

MULTIPLE USE, SUSTAINED YIELD, AND ENHANCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

It is the policy of the S. C. State Commission of Forestry to practice on forest lands under its jurisdiction, and to promote on other ownerships where applicable, the principles of high quality multiple use and sustained yield management, and to promote practices to protect and enhance environmental quality in the management of all forest ownerships.

Multiple use management considers and includes provision for timber production, grazing, fish and wildlife, air, water, soil, recreation, aesthetics, scenic beauty, and environmental quality, and wild, wilderness and natural areas, scientific research, and ecological considerations.

Multiple use involves the management of all the forest's resources and benefits so that they are utilized in the combinations that will best meet the needs of the people of South Carolina.

In most instances forest land is not fully serving the people if it is exclusively for a purpose which could also be achieved in combination with several other uses. However multiple use does not imply that all uses must coexist at the same time and place on a given acre of forest land. Because of specific circumstances, on a given acre, one use might be dominant while other uses are subordinated.

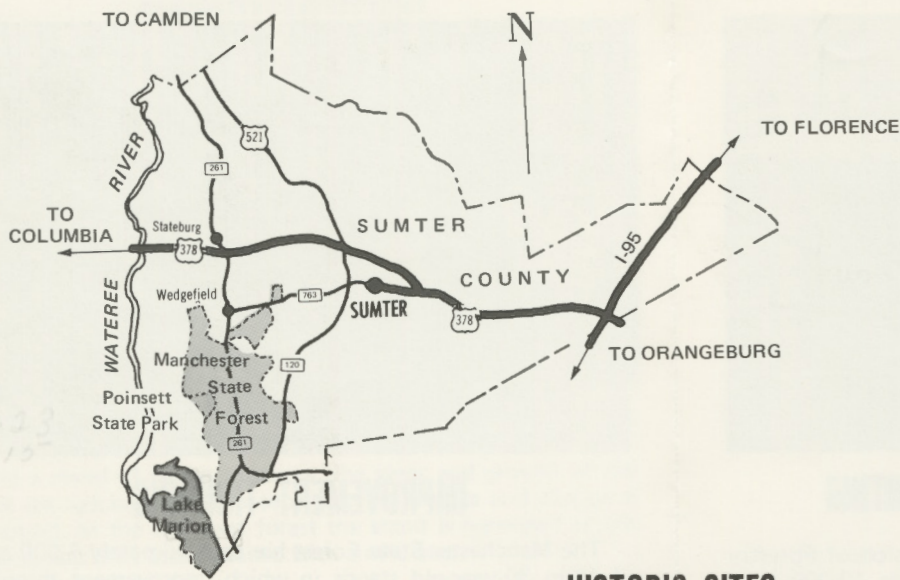
The practice of multiple use, which involves combining uses or purposes in a single unit, usually requires compromise which is seldom as efficient for any one use as if designed for any single use alone. However, the compromise and limitations are acceptable and desirable because of the greater total benefit.

Sustained yield of the products and services involved in multiple use management means the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the forests without impairment of the productivity of the land.

For additional information contact:

S. C. State Commission of Forestry
Box 27
Columbia, S. C. 29202
or
Manchester State Forest
Wedgefield, S. C. 29168

S. C. STATE LIBRARY



HISTORIC SITES

This area was one of the earlier inland settlements in South Carolina because the Cooper and Santee Rivers provided access into it. Many plantations were founded and prospered until the Civil War. Plantations on or near Manchester State Forest were Milford, Melrose and Bellefield. Melrose and Bellefield are now a part of Manchester State Forest.

Melrose Plantation was established in 1750. The Melrose house was in sound condition until it burned in 1962. A giant *Cedrus deodara* and stone monument mark the site of the house, built by Matthew Singleton, who founded a prominent South Carolina family. In the Civil War Colonel John Singleton and his grandson, descendants of Matthew Singleton, were killed while helping derail a locomotive of the South Carolina Railroad prior to Sherman's arrival in the area. The railroad bed, put up with drag pans and mules, is used today as an access road through a portion of Manchester State Forest.

Bellefield was probably a portion of an earlier plantation belonging to the Manning Family. Richard I. Manning, governor of South Carolina in World War I, built Bellefield and lived there except for his term as governor. Modernized, but retaining the old style architecture, Bellefield is now the residence of the Manchester State Forest Director.

The Milford Plantation house was built about 1850 by John L. Manning. Even in 1850 the house had a central heating system in the basement with hot air ducts made of brick. This house and plantation are still used. It borders a portion of Manchester State Forest's west boundary.

At the southern end of the forest is Fulton Crossroads. A historic marker honors Col. David DuBose Gaillard, engineer of the Panama Canal, who was born and reared near this point.

At the other end of the forest once stood the town of Manchester from which the forest got its name. No vestige of the town now remains. It owed its existence to its proximity to the inland limit of navigation by larger boats from coastal towns. In 1840 it was listed as one of the ten largest towns in South Carolina. With expansion of the railroad system, the town dwindled and eventually ceased to exist.

Located on Highway 51, St. Mark's Episcopal Church is surrounded by Manchester State Forest. The area's colonial life centered around this church. It was established in 1767. The cornerstone of the present building was laid in February, 1854, but it was preceded by four others in the area.

An early planter, Richard Richardson, was a prominent member of St. Mark's Church and a delegate to the First and Second Provincial Congress. He served with the army during the Revolutionary War, attaining the rank of brigadier general. Six South Carolina governors were among his descendants.

Ancestors of many prominent South Carolina families worshipped at St. Mark's. Occasionally services and homecomings are still held there.

Other nearby points of interest are the tomb of General Sumter, the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross in Stateburg where Joel R. Poinsett is buried, and the Iris Gardens of Sumter.